operations in agriculture and allowing private traders a free hand by withdrawing public agencies in procurement;

(b) whether Government are aware that between 2001-02 and 2005-06, there was a 10 percentage point decline in procurement relatives to the Indian wheat crop;

(c) whether Government are also aware that even as the current crisis was brewing between February and April, 2006, the FCI sold seven lakh tonnes of wheat in open market operation, essentially to private traders; and

(d) if so, whether it has worsened the problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) 2.46 lakh tonnes and 1.84 lakh tonnes of wheat under Open Market Sale Scheme (Domestic) (OMSS (D) was released in the month of Februray, 2006 and March, 2006 respectively to increase availability and stabilize the prices of wheat in open market. No release of wheat has been made under the OMSS (D) from April, 2006 keeping in view the low stock position of wheat in the Central Pool.

Effectiveness of Consumer Protection Act

447. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a survey conducted by an organization had revealed that the Consumer Protection Act is not effective;

(b) whether it is also a fact that a major percentage of population is not aware of the Consumer Protection Act and consumer rights; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken by Government to popularises the above Act?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN):

(a) The Department of Consumer Affairs has not commissioned any survey to assess the effectiveness of the,Consumer Protection Act, 1986.

(b) and (c) It is a testimony to the general awareness of consumenr rights under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 that since the establishment of the three-tier consumer disputes redressal machinery under this Act, nearly 26 lakhs cases have been filed in these fora. Further generation of consumer awareness including popularization of the Act is being done through the multi-media campaign of the Department of Consumer Affairs.

Lifting control under Essential Commodities Act

448. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Chief Ministers of certain States have recently requested the Central Government to lift all controls under the Essential Commodities Act, allowing dealers to buy, stock or sell any quantity of foodgrains;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action Government have taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Rising prices of Essential Commodities

449. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY:
DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY:
SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) the details of essential commodities which are monitored by the Price Monitoring Cell;

(b) the details of the essential commodities whose prices have risen between January to June, 2006;